

Linda Riddle
Executive Director
Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, Duluth

The Duluth Model

The Duluth model is looking at a problem, looking at a situation, in our case, the issues surrounding violence against women, and children. Talking with, and working with, the people who are affected by those issues and who have the most knowledge of those issues, women and their children. And then, taking what they say, their solution to problems, their perspective, to the other parts of the system, whether it's law enforcement, or the courts, or human services, or the schools, or health agencies, and working for changes that the women say will benefit them. And then. going back to the women and seeing if this working is this helping.

Power and Control Wheel

The power and control wheels are famous, infamous, they're world-wide, they're used everywhere. They are transferable, you can use them with women, to help show women that their experiences are not so unique. I mean every woman's situation is unique, but when a battered woman sees that so many other women have experienced isolation, and verbal abuse, and economic abuse in this kind of a systematic way so that it's been put on a wheel. I mean that really is an ah hah moment for women.

Violence Against Women Act

I mean I can remember when I used to talk in the early days in my job in Houston county [MN] that there, I mean we're in the 1990's, and there's been no federal legislation ever related to domestic violence, and then that changed in 1994 with The Violence Against Women Act. And just that statement, the Violence Against Women Act was a huge acknowledgement of the fact that it does exist and that we're not helping anything by pretending that it's something other than violence against women. I believe that violence against women is the greatest social justice issue of our day. I really believe that, and you cannot take the gender component out of it. Women are assaulted because of their gender. Whether its domestically or sexually, and children are assaulted often times because of their dependent relationships with their moms. So addressing violence against women as a social issue gives me a lot of strength.

Battered women have so much strength

My message is have compassion for yourself, and be gracious, and trust your instincts and if you feel like leaving is going to be helpful then plan for it the best that you can. And if you feel that leaving is not going to be helpful then respect your choice to stay and hold your head high. I mean battered women have so much strength, and so much courage to live, and survive in extremely difficult and scary situations, and so many

coping skills that are developed. You can use those skills out in the world if you choose, and if it is safer for you to remain for the short time, or for the longer, time then figure out ways to take care of yourself.

A very deep problem

It's a very deep problem. We've had hundreds of years, thousands of years, where violence against women was the norm. So in 25 years in one city in America, it's going to be ended because of the work we've done? The work that we've done has set the stage, I think. It set the stage to move forward with, and it has provided options for countless other communities, across, not just in the US, but across the world. But, it will take, it would take hundreds of years of everybody truly working together and truly making their best effort, at every situation, it would take the will of men to be nonviolent, it would take the will of men to be fair and equal partners.